

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

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P R 281644Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6464

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8032

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINT, EC

SUBJECT: HOPES FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE ENCOURAGED BY
WEEKS EVENTS

REF: QUITO 7855

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: HOPES THAT THE TRANSITION PROCESS WOULD
CONTINUE WERE ENCOURAGED LAST WEEK BY STATEMENTS OF THE MINISTER
OF GOVERNMENT AND GALO PLAZA AND THE NOMINATION OF ANOTHER
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH THE CONTINUATION OF RUMORS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY
OF A JOINT CIVILIAN/MILITARY GOVERNMENT, THE GOE APPARENTLY
FELT ITSELF OBLIGATED TO ISSUE ANOTHER PUBLIC DENIAL. MINISTER
OF GOVERNMENT COL BOLIVAR JARRIN, GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE
THE EVENING OF NOV 18 (PRECISELY ONE WEEK AFTER HIS STATE-
MENT ELIMINATING THE TRANSITORY PROVISIONS IN THE DRAFT
CONSTITUTIONS) TO ASSURE THE COUNTRY THAT THE GOVERNMENT
WILL CARRY THROUGH, IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME, ITS PLAN
TO RETURN ECUADOR TO CIVILIAN, CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.
JARRIN POINTEDLY NOTED THAT THE PRESENT TRIUMVIRATE WILL
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STAY IN OFFICE UNTIL IT TURNS OVER POWER TO AN ELECTED
CIVILIAN PRESIDENT. HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION
OF SUSPENDING THE TRANSITORY PROCEDURES OF THE TWO CONSTI-
TUTIONAL ALTERNATIVES WAS IN FACT TO MAKE THE PLAN MORE
WORKABLE.

3. AS IF TO REINFORCE JARRIN'S COMMENTS, GALO PLAZA,

PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL, HAS BEEN HITTING THE STUMP TO DRUM UP ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JANUARY CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM. SPEAKING BEFORE LARGE GROUPS IN QUITO AND GUAYQUIL, PLAZA FORECEFULLY PRESENTED THE MESSAGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED HIM OF ITS DETERMINATION TO CARRY THE PLAN THROUGH AND THAT PLAZA BELIEVES THAT THIS OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY THE ARMED FORCES TO RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT MUST BE SEIZED BY THE NATIONAL ELECTORATE.

4. IN THE MIDST OF INCREASED SKEPTICISM ABOUT MILITARY INTENTIONS THE IZQUIERDA DEMOCRATICA (DEMOCRATIC LEST - A SIGNIFICANT OFFSHOOT OF THE RADICAL LIBERAL PARTY) FORMALLY NOMINATED RODRIGO BORJA, ITS MOST ATTRACTIVE FIGURE, AS ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LAST WEEK AT ITS NATIONAL CONVENTION IN QUITO. BORJA THUS JOINS THE CONCNTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES' (CFP) ASSAD BUCARAM AND ABDON CALDERON OF THE RADICAL ALFARISTA FRONT (FRA, A LIBERAL PARTY SPLINTER) AS THE ONLY FORMALLY ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES. BORJA ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION IN THE NAME OF A "NEW POLITICAL GENERATION," DEDICATED TO POLITICAL PLURALISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

5. COMMENT: THAT THE GOE FELT COMPELLED TO ISSUE A SECOND PUBLIC DENIAL ABOUT THE MOVE TO A CIVIL/MILITARY GOVERNMENT JUST THREE DAYS AFTER THE FIRST IS EVIDENCE OF THE STRENGTH
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AND PERSISTENCE OF THOSE INTERESTED IN SUCH A POSSIBILITY. IT ALSO MAY MEAN THAT THE NAVY (GARCES-POVEDA) HAS COMPELLED THE ARMY (JARRIN-DURAN) TO COME UP WITH A STATEMENT AS REASSURING AS SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION GARCES' NOV 15 COMMUNIQUE. THE PRESS CONFERENCE OF NOV 18 APPEARS TO HAVE HAD ITS INTENDED EFFECT; RUMORS AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION HAVE DIMINISHED MARKEDLY.

6. BORJA'S CANDIDACY, LONG PREDICTED, IS SEMI-SERIOUS, SINCE WHILE FEW WOULD GIVE HIM A REAL POSSIBILITY OF ELECTION, HE COULD PLAN A SIGNIFICANT ROLE. AS A FORMER LIBERAL, HE WOULD PROBABLY DIMINISH THE VOTE OF ANY TICKET INVOLVING A LIBERAL. HOWEVER, BORJA'S CANDIDACY WILL ALSO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO FORM A STRONG CENTRAL-LEFT COALITION OF THE LIKE MINDED PARTIES SUCH AS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES.
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